



November 3, 2017

President Michael Kirst and Board Members  
California State Board of Education  
1430 N Street, Room #5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Agenda Item #5: ESSA per-pupil expenditure reporting requirement

Dear President Kirst and Board Members:

I write in response to agenda item 5 and the discussion of the new fiscal reporting required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). EdVoice urges the Board to direct staff to work with experts and staff to develop state guidance on establishing consistent and meaningful fiscal transparency, not to wait for non-binding guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.

Federal law has added a new fiscal reporting requirement that the state report for every school in the state the per-pupil expenditures for personnel and non-personnel costs disaggregated by funding source. This new fiscal data could be a powerful tool to support transparency and reflection in the local planning process, in terms of how a district decides to invest all its funds, including future LCFF supplemental and concentration funds, and federal funds. Education leaders, community partners, and other stakeholders can use the reporting to make comparisons across schools within a district and across districts. To be most helpful and meaningful in the reflection and planning process, the state has an important role to play.

Without guidance and leadership from the state on how data should be collected and reported, our one thousand school districts will each have to invest staff time and resources to figure out how to comply. And the results will not be comparable across districts, even though parents and other stakeholders will try to make those comparisons. If the state does not provide guidance, there won't be consistency with this data, resulting in a much more complex fiscal picture and much less useful tools for the system of local accountability and planning at the LEA level, and oversight by counties and the State.

EdVoice recommends that the Board not wait but lead on this important issue of fiscal transparency and direct staff to convene a diverse working group to develop recommendations for guidance to the field on the new fiscal reporting requirement.

If you any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Lucia".

Bill Lucia  
President & CEO

cc: Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director, California State Board of Education  
Judy Cias, Chief Counsel, California State Board of Education